

Message Text

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FOR SONNENFELDT AND HARTMAN

FOLLOWING REPEAT ROME 20088 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO FLORENCE
MILAN NAPLES 09 DEC 76

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ROME 20088

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SUBJECT: BERLINGUER OUTLINES NEW PCI INITIATIVE

1. SUMMARY: IN A LONG INTERVIEW IN THE DEC. 10 EDITION OF THE
PCI WEEKLY, RINASCITA, PARTY SECRETARY BERLINGUER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT
THERE IS NO SHORT-TERM ALTERNATIVE TO SUPPORTING THE ANDREOTTI
GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THE PCI SHOULD CONTINUE TO CREATE THE CON-
DITIONS FOR "A NEW FORWARD STEP" BY PARTICIPATING IN RESOLVING
CURRENT PROBLEMS AND KEEPING UP "STRONG PRESSURE ON THE DC."
UNDOUBTEDLY ANTICIPATING NEXT WEEK'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING,
BERLINGUER SAID THE PARTY HAD TO RELATE ITS SUPPORT FOR
AUSTERITY POLICIES (WHICH HE DEEMED NECESSARY) TO A CONCRETE PLAN
OF ACTION TO TRANSFORM SOCIETY, INCLUDING THE POWER STRUCTURE. HE
THEREFORE CALLED FOR AN "IMMEDIATE" EFFORT TO DEFINE THE PARTY'S
OBJECTIVES OVER THE "MEDIUM TERM" AND THE MEASURES NEEDED TO
OBTAIN THEM. BERLINGUER HINTED THAT THE LEFT WOULD SUFFER AN
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EROSION OF SUPPORT IF THE AUSTERITY PROGRAM WERE NOT ACCOMPANIED BY

A "TRUE CAMPAIGN OF POLITICAL INITIATIVE AND STRUGGLE" WITHOUT WHICH THE PARTY'S "EXPLANATIONS" WOULD BE "ABSTRACT AND STERILE." BERLINGUER IS CLEARLY CONCERNED ABOUT HIS PARTY'S PRESENT INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES, IS TRYING TO PUSH THE DC TO GREATER COOPERATION WITH THE PCI, AND IS, PERHAPS, LAYING THE BASIS FOR A DIFFERENT COURSE IF THE DC DOES NOT RESPOND. END SUMMARY.

2. BERLINGUER'S INTERVIEW BEGAN WITH AN ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT POLITICAL CLIMATE, IDENTIFYING BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE TRENDS. HE JUDGED AS BENEFICIAL THE PSI'S RECENT REJECTION OF THE DC'S "THESES OF RECOVERY" (REFORMATION OF A CENTER-LEFT COALITION) AND THE FACT THAT THE DC HAD REPUDIATED THE "ADVENTURISM" OF DE CAROLIS. HE WAS SHARPLY CRITICAL, HOWEVER, OF THE "EMPTYNESS OF THE DC'S POLITICAL LINE". IF THE DC REJECTS THE "HISTORIC COMPROMISE", LET THEM PROPOSE SOMETHING ELSE. BY FAILING TO COME UP WITH IDEAS WHICH "ADVANCE THE POLITICAL SITUATION," BERLINGUER SAID THAT THE "DEMOCRATIC FORCES" IN THE DC (ANDREOTTI?; ZACCAGNINI?) RISK CEDING THE PARTY TO THOSE WHO ARE ACTIVELY INTERVENING "TO CONDITION AND TRANSFORM THE DC INTO A MODERN CONSERVATIVE PARTY". BERLINGUER SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED MILAN'S IL GIORNALE AS THE ORGANIZING FORCE OF THESE "SOCIAL STRATA AND DETERMINED POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC GROUPS." ALTHOUGH THEIR VIEWS RANGED FROM UMBERTO AGNELLI TO DE CAROLIS, THEY REPRESENTED "A PHENOMENA WHICH DESERVES THE GREATEST ATTENTION." COMMENT: BERLINGUER'S INTERVIEW APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN IN LARGE PART AIMED AT THE DC WHICH BEGINS AN IMPORTANT NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING DEC. 10. BY STATING THAT "TIME IS SHORT," BERLINGUER IS IN EFFECT CALLING ON THE DC NOT ONLY TO REJECT THE CONSERVATIVE TREND BUT ALSO TO ENGAGE ITSELF MORE FULLY IN SUPPORT OF THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM. END COMMENT.

3. BERLINGUER ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PCI SEES NO PRESENT ALTERNATIVE TO THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT DESPITE ITS "EVIDENT INADEQUACIES." "WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM A GOVERNMENT CRISIS," HE ASKED? ITALY'S PROBLEMS COULD NOT BE RESOLVED BY PLACING THE JUNE 20 POLITICAL FRAMEWORK IN CRISIS. SINCE A "CRISIS IN THE DARK" PROVIDES NO SOLUTION, BERLINGUER HAD NOTHING NEW TO OFFER OTHER THAN CONTINUATION OF THE PCI'S PRESENT POLICIES: "TO WORK IN ALL SECTORS TO CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR A NEW STEP AHEAD, BY PARTICIPATING IN THE SOLUTION OF PROBLEMS," AND "BY EXERCISING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STRONG PRESSURE ON THE DC."

4. BERLINGUER INTERESTINGLY FELT COMPELLED TO COMMENT ON THE RECENT WARD COUNCIL ELECTIONS (ROME 19631) WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY DISAPPOINTING IN SOME INSTANCES FOR PCI DIRECTORATE MEMBER COSSUTTA TO HAVE CALLED FOR AN INQUIRY IN CERTAIN CASES. BERLINGUER SAID THE WARD ELECTIONS CONFIRMED THE PCI'S JUNE 20 ELECTORAL POSITION. BY ANALYZING THE RESULTS WARD BY WARD,

BERLINGUER SAID TWO CONCLUSIONS COULD BE DRAWN: 1) THAT A BLOCK AGAINST BLOCK STRATEGY DOES NOT FAVOR THE LEFT AS NOVARA PROVED (WHERE THE PCI RAN ON A LEFT COALITION TICKET), AND 2) THAT "THE DC REMAINS A RELEVANT FORCE THAT NOT ONLY GAINS FROM THE RIGHT BUT IS ALSO ABLE TO HOLD ITS LEFT."

5. BERLINGUER DESCRIBED THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AS DETERIORATING (HE CITED THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN IN THE US, THE FRG AND JAPAN AS WELL AS THE PROBABLE OPEC PRICE INCREASE), MAKING "AUSTERITY MORE NECESSARY THAN EVER." HOWEVER, THERE COULD BE NO LASTING ECONOMIC RECOVERY IF POLITICAL CHANGE AND RENEWAL, INCLUDING DISCUSSION OF THE POWER STRUCTURE, DID NOT TAKE PLACE AS WELL.

6. IN A CRITICISM WHICH APPARENTLY WAS DIRECTED ALSO TO HIMSELF, BERLINGUER SAID THAT THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAD OUTLINED THE PARTY'S ORIENTATION, BUT THAT SOMEHOW IT HAD FALLEN INTO "A POSITION THAT DOES NOT GO BEYOND THE SHORT TERM AND DOES NOT PROVIDE IN A CLEAR AND DETAILED WAY A CONCRETE VIEW OF THE ENDS, THE VALUES AND ALSO THE POSSIBILITIES FOR RENEWAL THAT THE STRUGGLE TO OVERCOME CRISIS PROVIDES."

7. UNDOUBTEDLY DIRECTED TO BOTH THE DC AND NEXT WEEK'S PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING (DEC. 13), BERLINGUER CALLED FOR AN IMMEDIATE "INITIATIVE" TO DEFINE THE PARTY'S MIDDLE TERM OBJECTIVES THAT WOULD INCLUDE CONCRETE PROPOSALS TO RENEW THE SOCIETY, MODIFY ITS PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT, AND LEAD THE COUNTRY OUT OF ITS PRESENT CRISIS. BERLINGUER SAID THAT "A PROJECT OF THIS TYPE" WOULD SERVE AS THE "PLATFORM" FOR A "TRUE CAMPAIGN OF POLITICAL INITIATIVE AND STRUGGLE" AND WOULD INVOLVE ALL OTHER DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL FORCES. IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH A CONCRETE PLAN OF ACTION, BERLINGUER SAID THAT THE POSITIVE MOMENTUM OF THE "WORKER'S MOVEMENT AND DEMOCRATIC FORCES" (IE. THE LEFT) COULD EBB AND EVEN SUFFER LOSSES. UNLESS THE POLICY OF AUSTERITY WERE RELATED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH A PROGRAM TO "RENEW SOCIETY," BERLINGUER WARNED THAT "EXPLANATIONS AND PROPAGANDA" COULD "REMAIN" "ABSTRACT AND STERILE."

8. COMMENT: GIVEN THE LONG PCI TRADITION OF OBSCURANTISM, THIS IS A REMARKABLE INTERVIEW FOR A PCI SECRETARY TO HAVE MADE PUBLIC. IT APPEARS TO US TO BE (AND IS SO INTERPRETED BY A NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS) A CLEAR RECOGNITION THAT THE PCI'S PRESENT POLICY OF SUPPORT IS CAUSING THE PARTY SERIOUS INTERNAL PROBLEMS. HE STATES THAT THE PARTY CANNOT REMAIN IMMOBILIZED IN ITS PRESENT ROLE; IF IT DOES, BERLINGUER BELIEVES IT WILL BE WEAKENED WHILE THE "RIGHT" FORCES GAIN STRENGTH. TO REMEDY THIS, HE CALLS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PCI PROGRAM TO "RENEW SOCIETY" WHICH HE PRESUMABLY BELIEVES WILL BECOME THE SUBJECT OF INTER-PARTY DIALOGUE AND THUS TAKE THE PLACE OF THE "ORGANIC LINK CONSULTATIONS" THAT THE PCI CALLED FOR IN OCTOBER. BERLINGUER'S INTERVIEW CAN ALSO BE READ AS

HINTING THAT HE IS BEGINNING TO DESPAIR OF THE "HISTORIC
COMPROMISE" (BECAUSE THE POSITION OF THE DC AS A WHOLE APPEARS TO
BE HARDENING). THE MESSAGE TO THE DC NATIONAL COUNCIL COULD
THEREFORE WELL BE: COOPERATE WITH US AND TONE-DOWN YOUR ANTI-
HISTORIC COMPROMISE TALK OR WE WILL TAKE A NEW LOOK AT THE DESIRAB-
ILITY OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY, WITH OR WITHOUT THE
DC. THE HASTILY CALLED PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING ON DEC. 13
WILL PRESUMABLY DEBATE THESE THEMES AND EVALUATE THE DC NATIONAL
COUNCIL'S ACTIONS AND REACTIONS.BEAUDRY

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